

August 6, 2021

Dear President Nickels and members of the Nebraska State Board of Education,

We, the 41 undersigned organizations, support the Nebraska Department of Education and the Nebraska State Board of Education in their development of Nebraska Health Education Standards which promote the development of health knowledge, health-related skills and positive attitudes toward health and well-being for students in our state.

We, the undersigned organizations, support the following essential elements for the Nebraska Health Education Standards:

- The Nebraska Health Education Standards must be created, informed, and shaped by local, state and national experts in children's physical and mental health and health education.
- The Nebraska Health Education Standards must be developmentally and age appropriate.
- The Nebraska Health Education Standards must be inclusive of all the diverse identities that our students bring to school and that create the diverse fabric of our communities – including LGBTQ+ students and youth of color and their families.
- The Nebraska Health Education Standards must be medically accurate, evidence-informed and include concepts that have been proven to prevent or reduce negative health outcomes.
- The Nebraska Health Education Standards must include concepts of sexual violence prevention, including accurate names for body parts, safe and unsafe touch, characteristics of healthy relationships and consent.
- The Nebraska Health Education Standards must include concepts of human growth and development, including the structures and functions of body systems and the changes that occur during development as well as the fundamental components of sexuality and healthy relationships.
- The Nebraska Health Education Standards must recognize and support parents and caregivers as educators of children in their own health education and strive to include parents/caregivers in the delivery of such educational content.

Nebraska public schools are responsible for making the learning environment a safe and healthy space that nurtures and protects all children; inclusive and comprehensive health education is an integral piece to creating a protective school environment for all children to learn, grow and lead healthy lives.

We urge the Nebraska Department of Education and the Nebraska State Board of Education to be guided by experts in children's health and health education and to maintain their commitment to equitable educational opportunities for all Nebraska's public school students by passing Nebraska Health Education Standards that include these essential elements outlined above.

Thank you for your commitment to our students.

ACLU of Nebraska  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands  
Black & Pink National  
CAPstone Child Advocacy Center  
Charles Drew Health Center, Inc.  
enCourage Advocacy Center  
Families in Action  
Family Health Services, Inc.  
First Light CAC  
Girls Inc. of Omaha  
GLSEN Omaha  
Haven House Family Services Center  
Heartland Family Service  
I Be Black Girl  
Immigrant Legal Center  
Inclusive Communities  
Magdalene Omaha  
National Association of Social Workers, Nebraska Chapter  
Nebraska AIDS Project  
Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers  
Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence  
Nebraska Family Planning  
Nebraska Urban Indian Health Coalition, Inc.  
Omaha Girls Rock  
OneWorld Community Health Centers  
OutNebraska  
Parent-Child Center  
PFLAG Hastings  
Project Harmony Child Advocacy Center  
Project Response  
Rape/Domestic Abuse Program  
Survivors Rising  
The Bridge  
The S.A.F.E. Center  
The Wellbeing Partners  
Voices for Children in Nebraska  
Voices of Hope  
Women's Center for Advancement  
Women's Fund of Omaha  
Youth Emergency Services  
YWCA Lincoln

CC: Nebraska Department of Education Commissioner Matt Blomstedt